



OKLAHOMA
Transportation



Hochatown Community Access and Pedestrian Safety Project

Project Readiness

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FY2025-2026 MPDG Application

MPDG Request: \$30 million

1. Project Readiness

This section provides an overview of the Project readiness for the Hochatown Community Access and Pedestrian Safety Project (Project).

Environmental Risk

A [Reconnaissance Data Collection Report](#) was developed in May 2021 for the Oklahoma Department of Transportation (ODOT) to review the potential environmental constraints on the Project area. Some of the constraints include the following:

- Potential impacts to streams and wetlands
- Protected species and habitats
- Hochatown Cemetery
- Federal properties
- Choctaw tribal ownership

ODOT does not anticipate any major challenges or risks associated with the Project, which results in a clear and concise schedule. This Project is expected to receive a categorical exclusion pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act, indicating it is not anticipated to have a significant effect on the human environment.

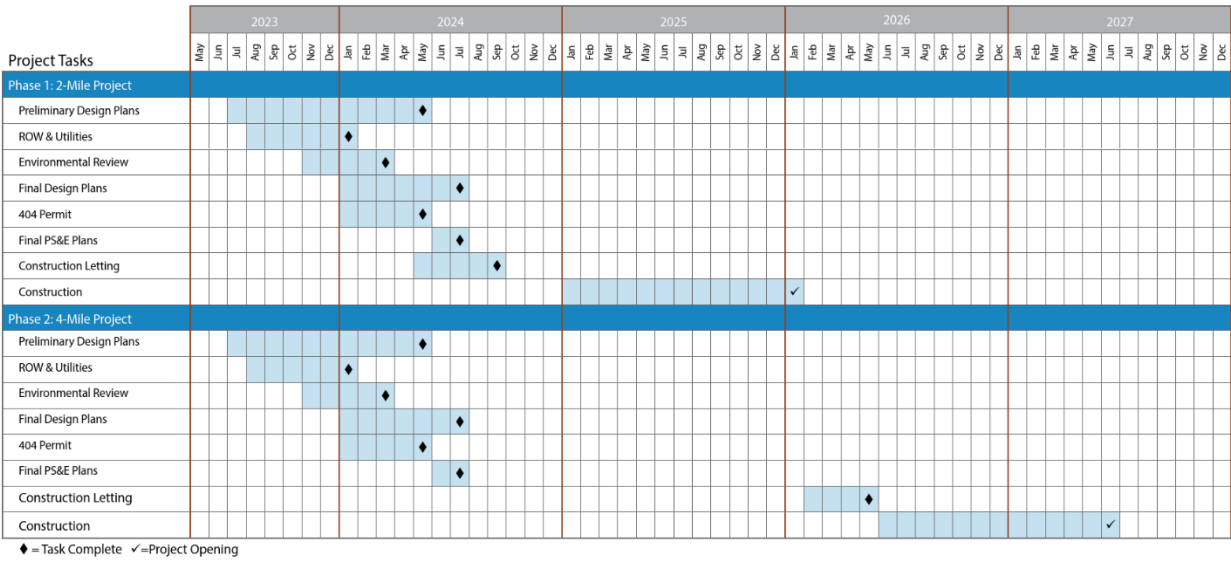
Detailed Project Schedule

ODOT has proposed an ambitious timeline for completing the Project, detailed on Figure 1. The 6-mile Project has been split into two phases— Phase 1 spans just over 2 miles, and Phase 2 extends 4 miles. Preliminary design plans (30% design) were completed in March 2023, and design continues on schedule for completion of 90% engineering plans and estimates targeted for May 2024, with the environmental review expected to wrap up by April 2024. Design for this Project, however, started well over 5 years ago. The following is a summary of Project-related activities that have occurred in preparation for this Project:

- US-259 Traffic Study, McCurtain County, OK, was completed in 2018.
- Traffic Impact Analysis, Choctaw Hochatown Resort was completed in 2018.
- Project costs (items and quantities) have been developed based on completed 30% and 60% design.
- Reconnaissance Data Collection Report was completed in May 2021.
- Preliminary Engineering Technical Memorandum was completed in March 2022.
- US 259 Typical Section Matrix Technical Memorandum was completed in January 2023.
- Multiple public outreach and engagement efforts have occurred since 2022.

Final design plans for Phases 1 and 2 are anticipated to be finalized by July 2024, with ongoing utility relocation and modification. Construction for Phase 1 is scheduled to begin by the start of 2025 and be complete and fully operational by early 2026. Phase 2 construction will commence in mid-2026 and be complete and operational by mid-2027.

Figure 1. Project Schedule



404 = Clean Water Act Section 404
 PS&E = plans, specifications, and estimate
 ROW = right-of-way

Following this timeline and sequence of events, ODOT can successfully complete Phase 1 and 2 of this Project, before the initial grant funds obligation date of September 30, 2028. The commitment to improving safety and operational performance is demonstrated through a Project schedule designed to provide the Hochatown area with immediate relief from its current challenges.

Required Approvals

ENVIRONMENTAL PERMITS AND REVIEWS

ODOT capital projects demonstrate receipt of all environmental approvals and permits necessary for the Project to proceed to construction on the timeline specified. The aggressive design schedule and accompanying environmental review schedule will be documented and completed well in advance of the final plans and start of construction.

This Project is expected to receive a categorical exclusion pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act, indicating it is not anticipated to have a significant effect on the human environment.

PERMITTING

This Project is expected to fall under U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Section 404 Nationwide Permit 14. Work will be within ODOT ROW, and it is not anticipated to require an individual permit. Also, ODOT has agency liaisons at USACE, who will accelerate and improve the consistency of permitting reviews for approval.

RIGHT-OF-WAY ACQUISITION

Relocations and ROW acquisitions will not be required for the Project, and this enables an efficient project development to anticipated construction without land acquisition processes. The US Route 259 (US 259) corridor has at least 65 feet of ROW from the roadway's centerline, with some variations in offset reaching 130 feet. This large ROW footprint minimizes the typical challenges associated with construction project impacts to residential and commercial property.

Use of retaining walls, rural curb and gutter, drainage structures, and access management will be considered throughout Project design to resolve potential issues around ROW constraints along US 259.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

ODOT has held multiple community outreach events to engage the public on the proposed Project. The first public event was held on October 27, 2022, at the Broken Bow Senior High School auditorium in Broken Bow. The event included the following:

- A presentation detailing the Project background in brief
- Description of existing conditions in the Project area
- Project goals
- Interim improvements
- Current operational traffic volumes
- Findings of the level-of-service analysis

ODOT hosted another open forum in Broken Bow on May 16, 2023, to receive community feedback on the decision-making process. This meeting focused more on the 6-mile segment of US 259 between State Highway (SH) 259A South and Golf Course Road. It delivered new data and information on the suggested safety improvements intended to address the concerns resulting from the substantial growth of tourism and new development.

ODOT held an in-person open house public meeting in Hochatown on March 26, 2024. The open house provided an update on current Project findings and solicited public feedback to support selection of Project alternatives. The meeting emphasized concerns for pedestrian safety and parking.

ODOT has established a dedicated public website for this Project to encourage greater involvement from stakeholders and the general public, and to foster ongoing stakeholder engagement throughout the Project's development process.

STATE AND LOCAL APPROVALS

The Project is presently included in ODOT's 8-year [Construction Work Plan \(CWP\)](#) and is also part of the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) for [Phase 1](#) and [Phase 2](#), covering the initial 4 years of ODOT's 8-year CWP. The Project has received broad community support; letters of support are available in the appendix of this application.

FEDERAL TRANSPORTATION REQUIREMENTS AFFECTING STATE AND LOCAL PLANNING

The Project is along a designated high-truck-volume corridor. ODOT recognizes high-truck-volume corridors as crucial to the movement of goods. Identifying these

corridors allows ODOT to focus its investment, maintenance activities, and enforcement efforts.

Assessment of Project Risks and Mitigation Strategies

Potential risks and mitigation strategies to minimize the potential impact of those risks are summarized in Table 1. ODOT will continue to evaluate the potential Project risks and adjust the mitigation strategies as coordination and design advance.

Table 1. Project Risk and Mitigation Strategies

Project Risk (Probability of Occurrence)	Mitigation Strategies
Cost Increases (Moderate)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ODOT has included the Project in its 8-year CWP and remains committed to adjusting the Project as needed to meet Multimodal Project Discretionary Grant and statutory deadlines for funding obligation and expenditure. ▪ ODOT’s construction estimates will contain a 12% contingency for Phase 1 and a 15% contingency for Phase 2, allowing for a margin of increase.
Public Consensus (Low)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ODOT will continue its close coordination with the community as design advances. ▪ ODOT will acknowledge the public’s support of the purpose and need for the Project to improve safety and provide additional connectivity and mobility, which will benefit the local community and tourists. ▪ ODOT will finalize scope details to address stakeholder and community concerns and incorporate public comments.
Utility Relocation and ROW— Acquisition (Low)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ODOT will engage with residents and business owners to effectively address ROW challenges as the Project progresses. ▪ ODOT will continue to collaborate with the community to develop creative, community-driven solutions to meet the needs of roadway users and protect Hochatown’s thriving business and economic growth.

Technical Capacity

As the Project sponsor, ODOT boasts decades of experience in managing the receipt and expenditure of federal transportation funds, demonstrating a long history of successfully delivering projects at a comparable scale. Committed to enhancing traffic conditions and safety on Oklahoma’s bridges and roads, ODOT confirms the obligation of all required construction funding before advertising a project and again before awarding a construction contract. With a consistent contract growth of less than 3%, any additional costs are covered by other federal fund formulas or Oklahoma State’s Rebuilding Oklahoma Access and Driver Safety funds. Moreover, this Project aligns with ODOT’s ongoing efforts to address safety and capacity improvements.

ODOT effectively manages a substantial portfolio of federally funded projects within the ODOT 8-year CWP, an \$8.4 billion program that annually prioritizes projects based on available state and federal appropriations and that is currently receiving 55% federal funding. Specifically, ODOT has expertise in securing competitive federal grant funding, having successfully managed multiple large infrastructure projects funded in part by the U.S. Department of Transportation through programs such as Infrastructure for Rebuilding America, Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity, Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development, the Competitive Highway Bridge Program, and Transportation Investment Generating

Economic Recovery. ODOT has a proven track record of collaboration with other agencies, including local governments and tribal nations, to successfully complete projects.